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ABSTRACT

A federal program designed to reduce dropout rates in middle schools among limited-English-proficient (LEP) students is described. The program trains LEP middle school students at risk of dropping out as tutors for elementary school children. A demonstration project trained 101 Hispanic student tutors in two Texas school districts. Evaluation of this project over two years included investigation of its implementation, dropout prevention results, and the academic achievement, self-concept, school attitudes, attendance, and discipline records of participating students in comparison with others. The project included classes for the student tutors, tutoring sessions, field trips, identification of adult role models, and special activities in recognition of the tutors' contributions. Support functions included curriculum development, coordination, staff development activities, parent involvement, and program evaluation. Measurable results of the program for participating tutors include a lower dropout rate, improved reading grades, and improved self-esteem and school attitudes. Program expansion is under way. (MSE)

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Valued Youth Program: Dropout Prevention Strategies for At-Risk Youth

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VALUED YOUTH PROGRAM: DROPOUT PREVENTION STRATEGIES FOR AT-RISK YOUTH

María Robledo Montecel
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Abstract

This article presents the findings of the Valued Youth Program, a national research and demonstration project funded from 1988 to 1990 by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Bilingual and Minority Language Affairs. The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), in collaboration with school district personnel, developed this instructional program in an effort to reduce dropout rates among middle school children who are limited-English-proficient and at risk of leaving school. Researchers found that tutors stayed in school, improved their reading grades, increased their self-pride, and developed a better attitude toward school and teachers. The NABE 1992 presentation was based on this research which was guided by Dr. José A. Cárdenas as executive director of IDRA. Dr. Richard Harris was responsible for the statistical design.

Introduction

In the mid-1960s, Dr. José Cárdenas, one of this country's pioneers in bilingual education, was superintendent of the Edgewood Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas. He struggled to erase the inequities between wealthy and poor school districts. It was his conviction that the children in his district who were primarily poor, minority and limited-English-proficient, had the same right to a quality education as children in the wealthiest districts. He believed it was the school's obligation to provide such an education to all children regardless of their parents' wealth or ethnicity.

In his struggle towards improving the educational opportunities for all children, especially the poor, minority and limited-English-proficient, Dr. Cárdenas sought ways in which educators would realize the tremendous potential and contributions of these children. It was in this context that the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program was born. The idea was to take secondary students who were considered "at risk" of dropping out of school and train them to become tutors of elementary school children. These "at risk" children then became "valued youth."

What began as one man's idea twenty-five years ago in a single school district in San Antonio, Texas has grown to a cross-age tutoring program in thirty secondary schools across the country. The program is internationally recognized for its effectiveness in reducing students' dropout rates and improving their grades, self-esteem, disciplinary action rates, and attendance rates.

This article presents the genesis and evolution of this program as it was developed and nurtured at the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) and the research that shaped it.

Background, Foundation and Theoretical Framework

IDRA's 1988 study on the under education of American youth demonstrated that children from non-English language backgrounds are 1.5 times more likely to leave school before high school graduation than those from English language backgrounds. Among Hispanics born in the United States, a non-English language background increases the chances of leaving school before graduating from high school. (Cárdenas, Robledo, and Waggoner, 1988).

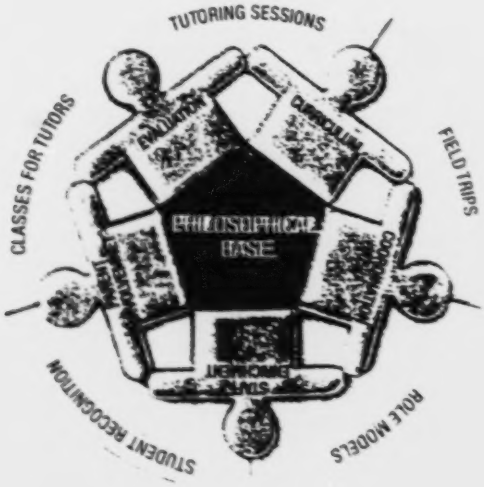
English-proficient children, they often failed to address the needs, characteristics, and strengths of the potential dropout. (Robledo, et al., 1986). In reviewing the research literature on effective programs for children at risk of dropping out, IDRA identified the following *critical elements* of an effective program. These critical elements served as the foundation for the Coca-Cola Valued Youth model:

- Provide appropriate bilingual instruction for limited-English-proficient students (Cordasco, 1976; Hakuta, 1986),
- Develop students' higher-order thinking skills (Brandt, 1988; Pogrow, 1988; Rose, 1987)
- Provide accelerated learning for disadvantaged students (Levin, 1987).
- Incorporate a cross-age tutoring component which places the at-risk student as tutor ("Big Kids", 1987; Hedin, 1987; Robledo, Cortez, & Penny-Velázquez, 1989).
- Provide programmatic activities designed to enrich, expand, extend and apply the content and skills learned in the classroom (Robledo, et al., 1989).
- Establish or encourage school-business partnerships that provide both financial resources or job opportunities and human resources as role models (Hispanic Policy Development Project, 1984).
- Increase student recognition of their accomplishments and talents (Canfield and Wells, 1980; Ochoa, Hurtado, Espinosa and Zachman, 1987), and encourage student leadership and participation (Moody, 1987).
- Involve parents in school activities that are meaningful and contribute to their empowerment (Cummins, 1986).
- Conduct and utilize evaluation of student learning for modification and improvement purposes (Coleman, 1982; Loucks and Zacchie, 1983; Madaus and Pullin, 1987).
- Plan for staff development in a cooperative manner (Crandall, 1983; Lowcks-Horsley and Hergert, 1985), and design campus activities with the curriculum and student needs in mind (Dorman, 1984; Levin, 1987; Raffini, 1986).
- Exhibit strong leadership that supports success (Lezotte and Bancroft, 1985), collaborates and establishes educational goals (Landon and Shirer, 1986; Sparks, 1983).
- Create a curriculum that incorporates self-paced and individualized instruction (Bickel, Bond, & LeMahieu, 1986; National Foundation for the Improvement of Education [NFIE], 1986), uses cooperative learning and whole language approaches.

Coca-Cola Valued Youth Model

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program (VYP) has six goals for "at-risk" students: (a) reduce dropout rates, (b) enhance students' basic academic skills, (c) strengthen students' perception of self and school, (d) decrease student truancy, (e) reduce student disciplinary referrals, and (f) form school-home-community partnerships to increase the level of support available to students. School districts across the country have slightly varying definitions of "at risk" youth, the characteristics of the "at risk" student often include: (1) reading below grade level, (2) a higher than average absenteeism rates, (3) a higher than average disciplinary action rates, (4) limited English proficiency, (5) of a minority background, and (6) poor. This program's model (shown in Figure 1) turns perceived liabilities into strengths, remediation into acceleration, and "at-risk" students into valued youth. The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program creates these transformations through instructional and support strategies that pivot around a time-tested concept: youth tutoring youth.

Figure 1: Intervention Model



The program's success is based on the idea of valuing "at-risk" children—those with the potential of dropping out—by placing them in positions of responsibility, as tutors of younger students. The tutors also receive a minimum wage stipend for participation in the program.

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is based on seven important tenets:

1. All students can learn.
2. All students are valued by the school.
3. All students can actively contribute to their own education and that of others.

4. All students, parents and teachers have a right to participate fully in creating and maintaining excellent schools.
5. Excellence in schools contributes to individual and collective economic growth, stability, and advancement.
6. Commitment to educational excellence is created by including students, parents, and teachers in setting goals, making decisions, monitoring progress, and evaluating outcomes.
7. Students, parents and teachers must be provided extensive, consistent support in ways that allow students to learn, teachers to teach and parents to be involved.

In 1984, Coca-Cola USA awarded $400,000 to IDRA to design, develop, and evaluate the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program. Between 1984-1888, IDRA implemented the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program in five school districts in San Antonio, Texas. Approximately 525 secondary school tutors and 1,575 elementary school tutees participated in the program during these years of Coca-Cola USA funding.

Building on this experience and using evaluation results which indicated that the program had an observable positive effect (Cárdenas, Sosa, Johnson, C., & Johnson, R.L., 1988), IDRA refined the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program and began implementation in 1988 with support from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA). As a two-year research and demonstration project, IDRA designed and developed the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, and researched its effects on 101 Hispanic, limited-English-proficient middle school students in two San Antonio, Texas school districts. Both districts had low property wealth and high concentrations of Hispanic, limited-English-proficient students.

Research Design

While there were a number of questions which guided the research design, the three most relevant for this discussion are:

1. How is the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program actually implemented at each site?
2. Did the Coca-Cola Valued Youth program have an effect on the dropout rate of the tutors when compared to the dropout rate of the comparison group?
3. Did the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program have an effect on the tutor's academic achievement, self-concept, attitude toward school, attendance and disciplinary record?

A quasi-experimental research design was used to answer each of these questions. Pretest data were collected for treatment and comparison students before tutoring began (Baseline - 1988), during implementation, and at the end of the first and second program years (Year 1 - 1989 and Year 2 - 1990, respectively).

A total of 101 tutors and 93 comparison group students were selected on the basis of two criteria: (1) limited English proficiency as defined by the State of Texas guidelines and (2) reading below grade level on a standardized achievement test. The State of Texas identifies limited-English-proficient students through the use of (1) a Home Language Survey which determines the language normally used in the home and by the student, (2) an oral language proficiency test which

determines proficiency in English, and (3) State approved standardized achievement tests (TEA Time and Treatment Guidelines, Spring 1986).

Both the tutors and the comparison group were selected from the same pool of "at-risk" students. Random selection from the same pool was done for the purpose of minimizing differences between the tutor and comparison group, thus decreasing the number of confounding variables in post-test comparisons. There were no Baseline differences between the tutors and the comparison group on age, average grade in reading, quality of school life and self-concept scores, ethnicity and retention. This provided the basis for rejecting rival hypotheses as part of the quasi-experimental design of the project. The only significant difference between groups was with lunch eligibility; tutors were poorer than the comparison group, a fact that only increased the likelihood of their dropping out.

Methods

Instruments and Procedures. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected on participants at the Baseline Year, and Years 1 and 2. Methodological and standardization rigor was maintained throughout the development of protocols for data collection. Qualitative measures included monthly journals for tutors, tutor surveys, and focus group interviews conducted with teacher/coordinators and counselors from each of the four participating campuses at the end of the first and second years of implementation (May 1989 and May 1990). Elementary school representatives also participated in the interviews in May 1990. Case study interviews were conducted with the tutors at the end of Year 2 (May 1990). These interviews generated important information on the roles and responsibilities of participants and the strengths and weaknesses of the program. With this formative information, refinements to the program were made the second year. The following measures were used to answer each of the research questions:

1. How is the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program actually implemented at each site?
   Measure(s): (a) Monitoring, Documentation, and Evaluations of all Interventions
   (b) Formal On-Site Observations
2. Did the Coca-Cola Valued Youth program have an effect on the dropout rate of the tutors when compared to the dropout rate of the comparison group?
   Measure(s): Enrollment Figures for the Tutors and Comparison Group (using the state dropout definition)

Student records of each of the tutors and the comparison group students were accessible to both IDRA and the individual teacher/coordinators and were kept up-to-date by the school registrar. Withdrawals were noted by the school registrar as were any subsequent requests for transcripts. As the end of June 1990, any student who had withdrawn from school and for whom there was no evidence in the registrar's office of a request for transcript from another school was defined as a "dropout" by the school and IDRA. A student is defined as a dropout by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) if he or she "is absent for a period of 30 or more consecutive school days without approved excuse or documented transfer from

the public secondary school (grades 7-12) in which he or she is enrolled; or if the student fails to re-enroll during the first 30 consecutive school days in the following semester or school year without completion of a high school program. Documentation for approved excuses or transfers [is accepted only] under standards set by the [Texas] commissioner of education" (W. N. Kirby, personal communication, January 26, 1988). In other words, students who withdrew from school and for whom no requests for transcripts were made by another school as of June 1990 were considered "dropouts."

3. Did the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program have an effect on the tutor's academic achievement, self-concept, attitude toward school, attendance and disciplinary record?

   Measure(s): (a) Disciplinary Action Referrals (number of actions against the student that are disciplinary in nature, as defined by each district;

   (b) Grades (class grades given by teachers in particular subjects, range: 0-100).

Reading grades given to tutors and comparison group students every six weeks by their reading teachers were averaged by school staff for each of the three school years: 1987-1988 (Baseline), 1988-1989 (Program Year 1) and 1989-1990 (Program Year 2). The average grades were then recorded on the individual student records by school staff. Grades were assigned on the basis of classwork and unit tests, (A=90-100; B=89-80; C=79-75; D=74-70; F= 69 or less). Schools provided IDRA access to student records and IDRA staff recorded the average reading grades from each of the three time periods.

(c) Minimum Competency Tests (Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills, TEAMS, measures student competency in mathematics, reading, writing at grades 1,3,5,7 and 9 and in mathematics and English language arts at grade 11/12; Possible Ranges: 0-999.

(d) Achievement Test Scores (standardized achievement scores as normal curve equivalents; Possible Range: 1-99). Normal curve equivalents are based on an equal interval scale. The normal curve is represented on a scale of 1 to 99 with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 21).

(e) Absentee Rates (number of days absent from school as defined and recorded by each district).

(f) Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (an 80-item, self-administered questionnaire designed to assess how children and adolescents feel about themselves; Possible Range: 0-80). (Piers-Harris, 1984).

Self-concept was measured with the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale - a self-administered, 80-item questionnaire designed to assess how children and adolescents feel about themselves. It is possible to score 0 to 80 on the scale. The normative mean is 51.84 with a standard deviation of 13.87. This was derived from a sample of 1,183 school children in grades 4-12 from a public

school system in a small Pennsylvania town (Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, Revised Manual, 1984). The counselor at each school administered the instrument to the tutors and comparison group students before the program began, at the end of Program Year 1 (1989) and Program Year 2 (1990).

(g) Quality of School Life Scale

Attitudes toward school were measured with the Quality of School Life Scale - a self-administered, 27-item questionnaire designed to measure student reactions to school, their classwork and their teachers. It is possible to score 0 to 27 on the scale. The mean lower limit for seventh graders is 10.86 while the mean upper limit is 13.56. These normative ranges are based on estimates of the distribution of averages of groups of a specified size (in this case, N=100), drawn randomly from the research sample of individuals. The Quality of School Life Scale is a widely used instrument with a significant body of research citing its reliability and validity. (The Quality of School Life Scale, Administration and Technical Manual, 1978). The counselor at each school administered the instrument to the tutors and comparison group students before the program began, at the end of Program Year 1 (1989) and Program Year 2 (1990). Each counselor was trained in instrument administration by IDRA staff before administering any instruments. A set of research protocols was developed for each instrument and their adherence monitored by IDRA staff in order to assure quality control.

Results

(1) How is the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program actually implemented at each site?

Through *monitoring, documentation, and evaluations of all interventions and formal on-site observations*, actual implementation of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program incorporated instructional and support strategies. The instructional strategy incorporated five major components:

Component 1: Classes for Student Tutors.

Classes were planned and taught by the teacher coordinator once a week in order to develop and enhance the students' tutoring skills; these skills included

(a) developing tutoring skills which would enable them to become successful student tutors;
(b) improving reading, writing and other subject matter skills enabling them to teach these skills to elementary school students; and
(c) developing self-awareness and pride.

Component 2: Tutoring Sessions.

After a two-week observation period in the elementary classroom during which students made note of discipline techniques, classroom management systems and materials use, they began tutoring a minimum of four hours per week. The student tutors, who received the federal minimum wage for their efforts, were expected to adhere to the employee guidelines of their host school. Their primary responsibility was to work in a one to three ratio with tutees. Each tutor was treated as an adult, with adult responsibilities, but was also provided teacher supervision and support.

Component 3: Field Trips.

Field trips were designed to expose students to economic and cultural opportunities in their local community. Through at least two planned field trips

throughout the year, students expanded their horizons beyond the classroom and recognized the interrelationship between schooling and the wider community.

Component 4: Role Models.

An important component of the program involved the identification of adults who were considered successful in their fields and who represented students' ethnic background(s). One powerful kind of modeling can be provided by a person who overcame serious barriers to survival and success.

Component 5: Student Recognition.

Students were acknowledged for their efforts and contributions made while fulfilling their responsibilities as tutors. Throughout the year, students were invited on field trips with their tutees, received media attention and were honored at a luncheon or supper. Students experienced, through these events, the importance of their tutoring to the school and the district.

The five major components of the instructional strategy required a parallel set of activities and functions in support of the program and included the following:

Component 1: Curriculum.

The primary goal of the base curriculum was meeting the needs of the tutors. Its objectives were improving the students' self-concept, tutoring skills and literacy skills. The curriculum offers an opportunity for praxis—an ongoing interplay between the action (tutoring) and reflection.

Component 2: Coordination.

Coordination provided a planned and structured design. This was crucial to establishing and continuing educational as well as program goals, objectives, and activities. An implementation team with clear definition of roles was imperative to the success of the program.

Component 3: Staff Enrichment.

The goal of staff enrichment was to create a cohesive group that was dedicated and committed to success, and that had high expectations for the students and their peers.

Component 4: Parental Involvement.

Empowering minority and disadvantaged students required involving parents in meaningful school activities. Activities with parents included a meeting to enlist their understanding and support for the program's goals. A vigorous personal outreach plan was also implemented in which a culturally-sensitive, bilingual outreach person visited parents' homes, especially those without a phone or who had not participated in parent activities.

Component 5: Evaluation.

Program evaluation served (1) to monitor VYP operations and develop on-course corrective action as needed, and (2) to document the results of VYP implementation. Both quantitative and qualitative measures previously mentioned were used to gauge student progress.

(2) Did the Coca-Cola Valued Youth program significantly reduce the dropout rate of participating student tutors as compared to the dropout rate of the comparison group?

Using the *enrollment figures and the state definition for "dropout,"* one tutor out of 101 (1%) dropped out of school towards the end of the two-year Valued Youth Program. Eleven students of the 93 comparison group students (12%)

also dropped out as of June 1990. These results are comparable to the results for the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program implemented from 1984 to 1988. In that program, 13 (2.5%) of the tutors dropped out of school.

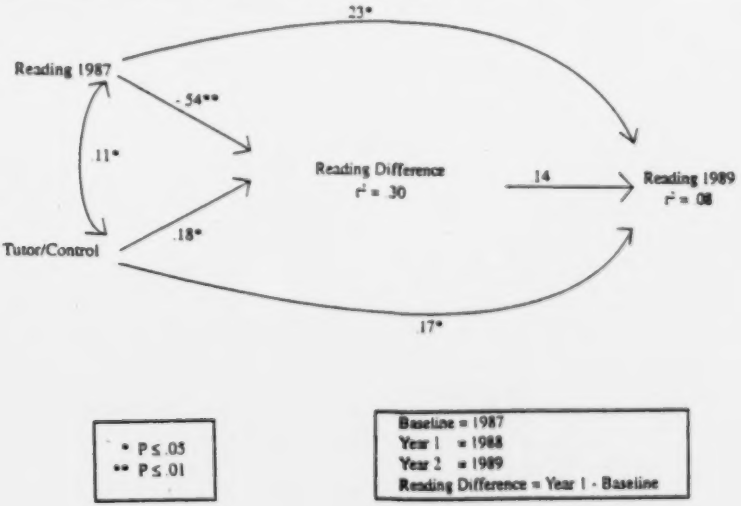
(3) Did the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program have an effect on the tutor's academic achievement, self-concept, attitude toward school, attendance and disciplinary record?

a. Disciplinary Action Referrals (number of actions against the student that are disciplinary in nature, as defined by each district): No disciplinary records were available at Baseline, thus making a matched case analysis across time impossible. However, from Year 1 to Year 2, tutors lowered their mean disciplinary referral rate from 3.2 to 2.0, while the comparison group raised their from 2.5 to 2.9.

b. Grades (class grades given by teachers in particular subjects, range: 0-100): When compared to the comparison group, tutors in the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program achieved higher reading grades after participation in the program.

A two-step multiple regression analysis procedure was employed to determine the effect of the program on change in reading grades from the Baseline year (1987) to Year 1 (1988) and on final reading performance in Year 2 (1989). The two regression equations provide all of the coefficients necessary to complete the path analysis model as illustrated in Figure 2; the path model clearly shows that the Valued Youth Program has a significant positive effect on reading grades. The students in the tutor group experienced an increase in reading grades between 1987 and 1988, and being in the tutor group is also related to significantly higher reading grades in 1989.

Figure 2: Path Model for Average Reading Grades



Focusing on reading differences, the tutors gained nearly three points more than the comparison group on the reading grade between 1987 and 1988, controlling for the initial 1987 reading grade. By 1989 the tutors scored nearly three points higher than the comparison group again even when the reading difference between 1987 and 1988 and the base year reading grades are included in the regression analyses.

The small correlation (.23) that exists between 1987 and 1989 reading grades appeared counter-intuitive and not consistent with other research in reading. In order to examine this phenomenon further, the data were desegregated by tutor and comparison group and correlations between 1987 and 1989 reading grades by group were generated. The data indicate that among comparison students reading grades are correlated positively (.25, $p < .05$); among tutors, baseline reading grades (1987) and post-treatment grades (1989) are not correlated. Coupled with the regression analyses presented earlier, these data suggest that participation in the Valued Youth Program creates a departure from the predicted performance of students. The consistency of assigned grades that would be expected for poor performing students is broken and reading grades improve significantly for tutors over each of the two years.

c. Minimum Competency Tests (Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills, TEAMS, measures student competency in mathematics, reading, writing at grades 1,3,5,7 and 9 and in mathematics and English language arts at grade 11/12; Possible Ranges: 0-999): At the end of Year 1, the comparison group scored higher than the tutors in all three subtests. No TEAMS tests were administered in Year 2.

d. Achievement Test Scores (standardized achievement scores as normal curve equivalents; Possible Range: 1-99): Normal curve equivalents are based on an equal interval scale. The normal curve is represented on a scale of 1 to 99 with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 21).

At the end of Year 1, tutors had higher normal curve equivalents (NCE) means than the comparison group for mathematics (41.9 vs. 40.6), language (37.4 vs. 37.3), science (34.1 vs. 33.6), and the composite score (35.5 vs. 35.1). At the end of Year 2, tutors had a higher mean NCE than the comparison group for reading (29.8 vs. 29.4), language (35.7 vs. 34.7), mathematics (40.5 vs. 37.4) and the composite score (34.5 vs. 33.2). The comparison group scored higher than the tutors in science (35.4 vs. 35.2) and social studies (36.6 vs. 34.4).

e. Absentee Rates (number of days absent from school as defined and recorded by each district): At Baseline, tutors had a higher mean absentee rate than the comparison group (8.1 vs. 7.3). However, while tutors lowered their mean absentee rate to 7.6 at the end of Year 1, the comparison group raised their mean absentee rate to 8.9 ($p=.06$). At the end of Year 2, tutors raised their mean absentee rate to 8.4 while the comparison group lowered theirs to 7.0. It should also be noted that the comparison group of students who left school had the highest mean absentee rate of all groups — 14.7 at Baseline and 12.4 at Year 1.

f. Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (an 80-item, self-administered questionnaire designed to assess how children and adolescents feel about themselves; Possible Range: 0-80): When compared to the comparison group, tutors in the

Valued Youth Program had a higher self-concept as a result of their participation in the program.

A two-step multiple regression analysis procedure was employed to determine the effect of the program on change on self-concept scores from the Baseline year (1987) to Year 1 (1988) and on self-concept scores in Year 2 (1989).

The fact that there is no direct influence of tutoring on the 1989 self-concept score suggests a threshold effect in which the self-concept gains are achieved largely in the first year. The strong positive influence of self-concept change from 1987 to 1988 on self-concept scores in 1989 suggests that the initial influence of the Valued Youth Program is maintained during the second year.

The tutors gained four points on the self-concept scale over the comparison group. Between 1987 and 1988, these results are consistent with other program findings. Teacher/coordinators, when asked to rate the individual tutors on self-concept at each of the three time periods, had consistently higher ratings at each time period. The teacher/coordinators rated seventy-six percent (76%) of the tutors' self-concept very positively/positively at Baseline; that increased to 83% at Program Year 1; and 87% at Year 2.

g. Quality of School Life Scale (a self-administered 27-item questionnaire which measures student reactions to school, their classwork and their teachers; Possible Range: 0-27): Tutors in the Valued Youth Program had a better attitude toward school as a result of their participation in the program than their counterparts in the comparison group.

As with reading grades and self-concept scores, a two-step multiple regression analysis procedure was employed to determine the effect of the program on change on quality of school life scores from the Baseline year (1987) to Year 1 (1988) and on quality of school life scores in Year 2 (1989). In this case, the tutors had a significantly greater increase in QSL scores between 1987 and 1988. The fact that there is no direct influence of tutoring on the 1989 QSL score suggests a threshold effect in which the QSL gains are achieved largely in the first year. The strong positive influence of QSL change from 1987 to 1988 on QSL scores in 1989 suggests that the initial influence of the Valued Youth Program is maintained during the second year. Between 1987 and 1988, the tutors gained over three points more on the QSL scale than the comparison group.

As with the self-concept ratings, teacher coordinators' ratings of their tutors' attitudes toward school also increased after participation in the program. A Friedman test on Baseline, end of Year 1 and end of Year 2 data yielded significant Baseline to Year 2 increases for tutors' interest in academics ($p=.03$), class ($p=.001$), and school ($p=.01$), their ability to socialize with the school environment ($p=.05$), their desire to graduate ($p=.04$), and their relationship with teachers ($p=.008$).

The qualitative measures including the case study interviews added another dimension to the study which the quantitative measures may not show as powerfully.

"Manuel" is a 15 year old eighth grader at Middle School #4. He was retained twice in school. He lives at home with his parents and a 12 year old sister in the fifth grade. His two older sisters are 24 and 25 and have been married for a year and a half. Both of his older sisters graduated from high school and have had 2-3 years of college. They left college to work.

Manuel's parents were both born in the U.S. and have been married for 25 years. Manuel's father is a janitor at a department store and his mother works full-time as a seamstress. Learning both languages is encouraged although Spanish is spoken more often in the home than English.

At the end of Year 1, Manuel had improved his average grade in English from 79 to 82. His TEAMS reading score also improved from 810 to 838. His achievement test NCE scores improved for reading (30 to 37) and composite (32 to 41).

At the end of Year 2, Manuel had increased his average reading grade from 70 to 83 and maintained his English average - 82. His achievement test scores improved in reading (37 to 39), language (29 to 41), science (23 to 32), social studies (23 to 42) and composite (41 to 44).

At the end of Year 1, Manuel's self-concept score went from 64 to 73 and his QSL score went from 22 to 24.

Manuel's parents and older sisters encourage him to finish school. Since being in Valued Youth, Manuel also believes it is important that he graduate; "...if they don't finish school, they're going to have a tough time going through life. And I know because all my cousins have dropped out of school....They don't have a job....They go through tough times. And I don't want my sisters or myself to go through that."

Manuel tutored fifth graders in Year 1 and two third grade girls in Year 2. He believes he's made a difference in the lives of his tutees, "their attitudes toward their teachers and coming to school and doing their homework....They have a lot of positive attitudes toward other things...." Manuel wants his tutees to finish school and have a good job; "...I care for them. It's bad for people to see Hispanics drop out. I just get sick every time I hear that."

Making a difference in their lives had an effect on Manuel as well, "It makes me feel glad because I know that I helped them out and accomplished what I was supposed to accomplish in this program."

Manuel believes his teachers treat him differently than the other students because of his involvement in Valued Youth, "...they [teachers] treat you like they have more respect for you, not like some other students...they know that you're in the program...they should respect you more than the other kind, because we have experience...two years helping out the little kids...."

Manuel saves half of the stipend for college; "I want to keep on saving it. Hopefully, some day if I have to go to college and pay my own way then I'll just use it for college." So far he has $300.00 in his savings account at the bank. He used the other half of the money to buy gifts for his family.

He believes Valued Youth improved his behavior, as well. He has a better relationship with his teachers and principal, "...now I know they're there to help us." His relationship with his parents has also improved, "...I used to fight with them a lot and now I get along with them like I'm supposed to. We don't argue anymore, well, sometimes over little things...I used to go out a lot...now I don't. I wouldn't do those things no more [sic]."

After Year 1, Manuel enrolled in a junior police academy. This special program, offered by the local police academy, takes teenagers interested in a future in law enforcement, ages 15 to 21, and offers them initial police training. Occasionally Manuel walks the malls with security officers. Manuel sees him-

self going to college and working in law enforcement. He wants a wife and children some day and to own house.

Conclusions

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program was specifically designed to transform "at risk" students into "valued youth." Results from this two-year research and demonstration project show that the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program transformed Hispanic, limited-English-proficient students who were deemed at risk of dropping out into valued youth whose contributions to younger children were recognized and celebrated. The measurable results included a lower dropout rate, an improvement in their reading grades, their self-esteem and attitudes toward school.

The research findings from this study resulted in the U.S. Department of Education's Program Effectiveness Panel's approval of the program for inclusion in the National Diffusion Network (NDN); the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program remains the only Title VII funded program to be approved for the NDN.

After a period of research-based refinement, the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program continues to maintain the same critical elements and methodological rigor. IDRA recognizes this is critical if the program's integrity is to be maintained as it expands exponentially. In 1990 the Coca-Cola Foundation awarded IDRA $1.325 million to replicate the program in five secondary schools across the country. Three years later, the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is being implemented in thirty secondary schools across the country, impacting over 800 middle and high school tutors and 2400 elementary tutees from Montana to New York to California to Florida. The valued youth selected for the program continue to be minority, poor, and limited-English-proficient. Most are Hispanic and most continue to benefit from the program as IDRA's evaluation has shown.

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